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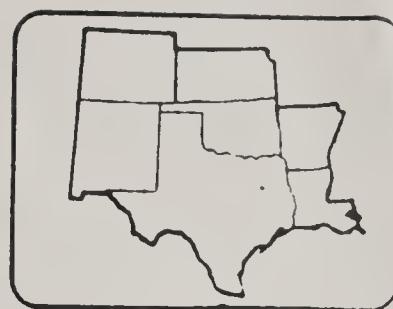
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-45A44 USDA Clarifies Action Taken on Nitrites and Ascorbates in Bacon

~~Reserve~~ The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has clarified actions taken recently concerning the use of nitrites, nitrates and ascorbates in bacon.

Carol Tucker Foreman, assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, said the clarifications were being issued to eliminate some confusion which arose since USDA published regulations on May 16 to eliminate carcinogenic nitrosamines from fried bacon and to reduce the nitrite level in bacon.

The amended regulations, published in the July 25 Federal Register, clarify who is responsible for conducting tests if confirmable levels of nitrosamines are found and the particular lots of bacon which are to be retained.

In addition, the requirement that confirmable levels of nitrosamines be lowered to 5 parts per billion within one year has been deleted. This action was taken because confusion had arisen over the fact that this provision appeared in both the final rule issued May 16 and in the proposal issued the same day.

The proposal, which would reduce by two-thirds the amount of nitrite presently used in making bacon, remains unchanged by the July 31 action. Comments on that proposal are due by Nov. 16.

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